

Special Meeting of Monday, February 28, 2011 (Commission Interviews)
One Twin Pines Lane, Third Floor Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER 7:07 P.M.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Feierbach, Warden, Lieberman, Wozniak, Braunstein

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: City Clerk Cook

Interview candidates for City Commissions

Mayor Feierbach stated that she spoke with Planning Commissioner Parsons following his interview on February 24th. He advised her that he had not expected the line of questioning that transpired, and he does not have the power to do what was asked of him by Councilmember Lieberman. She requested that Council not badger applicants or put them in compromising positions. She recommended speaking directly with a commissioner if there are issues to be addressed.

Councilmember Lieberman stated that the interview presented an opportunity for Commissioner Parsons to address issues that exist with the Planning Commission. He asked if other Councilmembers felt his line of questioning constituted badgering. He encouraged Councilmembers to listen to the recording of the meeting for further clarification.

Councilmember Warden concurred that Commissioner Parsons had been badgered.

Councilmember Braunstein stated that there may be better ways to ask questions to illicit the information being sought. He expressed support for asking questions regarding commission behavior.

Councilmember Wozniak noted that the questioning put Commissioner Parsons on the spot with a limited amount of time for questions. She stated that the Planning Commission does a good job, and she noted that Commissioners are sometimes sharp with applicants.

Pantea Zakeri (Parks and Recreation Commission Youth) stated that she attends Notre Dame High School and has lived in the area for many years. She is on the Student Council. She expressed a desire to affect the community in a positive way. She enjoys politics and wants to get youth involved by attracting them to new programs, and suggested activities such as movie night and battle of the bands. She would make activities sound like fun. She would like to bring fresh ideas. She stated that her school schedule will allow her the time commitment for the commission. She has not attended meetings but read recent minutes where Davey Glen Park and Barrett were discussed. She stated that through her work on the Student Council she regularly interacts with adults and easily connects with them.

Dick Ashby (Finance Commission) stated that he is recently retired from Bank of America, and

has also served as a credit manager. He has lived in Belmont for 43 years and is involved with the Belmont Heights Civic Improvement Association (BHCIA). He expressed a desire to contribute and to learn about municipal government and finances, and he has the time to commit. He stated that Belmont is a clean community with an attentive police department. He also stated that although he does not know much about the City's finances, his impression is that it is fiscally responsible and well run. He described his experience with group dynamics and noted that one must strike a balance. He stated that other cities and states are having financial difficulties and he would want to explore how to run the city like a business. He expressed the need to be able to pay for fire services.

Susan Wright (Parks and Recreation Commission Incumbent) stated that her primary goal is the completion of Semeria and Davey Glen Parks. She is interested in synthetic turf installation and the potential dog park issue at Barrett. She stated that the ad hoc committee for Davey Glen Park has provided good feedback. Other areas of interest are paper trails, the Parks master plan, and the establishment of a Parks Foundation. She noted that walkability and sustainability are important qualities, and parks should be located within walking distance for residents. She would like to explore a solar program for city facilities. She expressed frustration with the pace of issues and projects. She would like to have more public input on projects, as opinions are valued. She suggested establishing a mentoring program for the youth members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. She stated that there would be value in televising Commission meetings. She stated that the priority calendar process could have been packaged more efficiently, and she is concerned that there are too many projects on the list. She described the Green Advisory Committee (GAC) procedures and issues, and noted that all members are jumping into issues that matter to them.

Councilmember Warden expressed concerns about a city-sponsored group like GAC lobbying for legislation, and he suggested that GAC become an independent organization. Commissioner Wright stated that GAC has more credibility since it was appointed by the City Council and was mandated to bring initiatives forward. She noted that staff does not need to be at all the meetings.

Kevin Sullivan (Parks and Recreation Commission Incumbent) expressed his support for the near-completion of Semeria Park, and he noted that he is part of the Davey Glen subcommittee. He shared Councilmember Warden's concern regarding the finances for Davey Glen and noted that the project was scaled down as a result. He stated that play structures are expensive, as is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, and the park site is a difficult one. He commented that he has learned to not form an opinion on an issue before discussing the matter with the full commission. He noted that sports groups have champions, and turf is a good idea. He stated that the Davey Glen area is under-served and there is value to provide something new to the region. He stated that the proposed park might need to be more passive to meet the budget, but that it is not acceptable to do nothing. He expressed support for televising Commission meetings. There is a need for the commission to be more efficient and professional. He stated that the Parks and Recreation staff is doing a good job of adding recreation classes. He expressed support for a Parks Foundation, and for a billboard at the Sports Complex.

Tom McCune (Planning Commission) described his work with the Tennessee Valley Authority. He stated he is an architect, and he outlined his planning experience in Kansas. He stated he is able to have a balanced view of issues. He has lived in Belmont a short time, but previously lived in San Mateo. He comes with no agenda and would follow direction from the City Council. He is familiar with planning procedures from other cities. He feels the current process for establishing business in Belmont is onerous, and he recommended a streamlined permit process. He described the City of Salinas as a good model, and noted that the City of Menlo Park is an obstructionist. He noted that in order to promote economic development, one must implement policies and follow the General Plan. He stated that Planning Commissioners should not be designers but need to analyze what the applicant wants to do, and to consider the neighbors. He said that if there is a need to say no, it should be said quickly. He stated that Belmont is one of the better cities in the area, but that there is always room for improvement. He commented that he is retired and has the time to devote.

Stuart Latimerlo (Parks and Recreation Commission) described his work as co-Director of the Dorothy Stang Center at Notre Dame de Namur University. He stated he is a career coach and is an avid cyclist. He noted that the parks and recreation department of his hometown was a critical hub when growing up. He described his involvement with the Belmont Lions Club, and that joining the commission would be another way to engage with the City. He noted his familiarity with the improvements under way at Waterdog Lake to make the area more accessible to more interests. He commented that there is a need for more constructive and positive activities for teens.

Gladwyn d'Souza (Planning Commission) stated that issues are coming forward from the Green Advisory Committee (GAC). He would like to address the circulation element of the General Plan and to integrate that with other areas such as paper trails. He described the need to express a different opinion if appointed to the commission. He noted the implementation of a tiered pricing structure for the garbage rates, and expressed support for using this tiered system for services and development. He would be a voice for green issues, and can suggest sustainable and green ideas through design review. He stated that development should be placed where infrastructure exists, and he expressed support for transferring development rights to reduce costs for additional infrastructure. He noted that density on the El Camino Real is the economic lifeline for the City. He commented that streets are often designed only for cars. Businesses need customers to thrive.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:05 P.M.

**Terri Cook
City Clerk**

Meeting Tape Recorded and Videotaped
Audio Recording 782